

## Coordinators Report AGM 2010 - 26<sup>th</sup> May 2011

The year since our last AGM has passed so quickly. As I think back over the past 12 months I reflect on the degree to which we achieved the goals that we set ourselves for the year, and those issues and challenges that arose which added to the complex mix of events and activities that carried us through the year.

One of the most obvious achievements was the management of all the capital works programs that needed to be completed in order for the school to deliver its educational programs with comfort and efficiency.

We were able to complete the oval, construct a Basketball court, instal a very cosy heating system, build a verandah across the northern end of the primary school, extend the classrooms for K12 and finally have our new school hall (nearly) completed.

Although the funding was from the Commonwealth government the school opted to project manage these capital works in order to extract the maximum value and to achieve the best quality of outcome. These tasks were taken on by existing members of the school community with the same spirit of determination that carried us through the relocation process.

At the same time our review of business operations lead to changes in personnel, roles and responsibilities. There remains however ongoing work to be done at School Council level in reviewing management and financial policies in order to achieve the financial security that is part of the Council's responsibility.

Our enrolments increased slightly this year and it appears this trend will continue. We put a lot of time and energy into communicating and marketing our school. On matters of principal we have engaged the debate, for example on Naplan, and our response is a matter of public record.

We believe that our school offers education based on principles that remain timeless and immutable. As we strive to make these principles evident in the everyday practices of the school we believe that we attract families that share these principles in common. In a world of increasing political and emotional complexity we trust that our students learn vital lessons in how to be in the world as strong citizens and contributors to healthy communities.

We want the world to know we exist and that communities, or schools, can create for themselves their own visions of sustainability and endurance. The year ahead will be interesting in seeing how we develop relationships with the wider national and international education community.

We sought and achieved re-registration with the Commonwealth Government to be eligible to enrol overseas students. After the debacle of the overseas student programs for tertiary students in Australia last year, the compliance requirement for this process were onerous.

It is our intention to actively seek enrolments from students in the Asian region as part of our

relationship building with our regional neighbours.

A challenge for all independent school is to develop mechanisms for ensuring continuity of educational process and practices as new staff enter and older staff leave or retire from the school.

Whilst Korowal has a commitment to our founding principles, it also has a commitment to be open to change and evolution. As new members of staff join our community it is vital that they have a place to challenge and debate current practices and policies. All staff support this ideal and spend a considerable amounts of their time in reflection and review as part of our structured professional development.

A test of this proposition occurred in the last year with the resignation/retirement of long-serving and experienced members of staff, Bob Tucker, Catherine Dignam, Jennifer Read and Mary-Ann Marshall. We recruited new teachers, Lisa Harding, Greg Brooks and Maria Bubna-Litic in the high school and Kizz Boyd, Bec Wilkinson and Sarah McGowan in the Primary School.

Each of the new teachers has, with delightful capacity, commenced their work this year bringing a recognition of what Korowal requires of them as classroom practitioners but also participating in the ongoing discussions on the purpose of the school, and how they, as individuals, sustain it, now and into the future.

A measure of our community, that it is in fact a community has been the degree of support offered, firstly to Ella Moon, a student in Year 6, who has been ill for a very long time and her parents. Secondly to the illness and finally death of our dear colleague Kathi Beck. As I prepare this address the funeral arrangements for Kathi are taking place and I have the privilege of experiencing the whole community respond to her family's request to have the funeral service at school.

My colleagues, in both teaching and general staff do a remarkable job. The goodwill expressed through their conduct and dedication is the sustaining force of the school. I also find my interactions with parents and of course the children reminds my that my dedication to the school is worthwhile.

There are some people who need specific acknowledgement.

Firstly, Annie Carment. Annie's role as a full-time volunteer has continued this year with her dedication to the schools marketing, including producing the newsletter, arranging all our media advertising, managing the website and ensuring all our good news is communicated as far and wide as possible.

Secondly the Executive team of Nancy Oosterhoff, Barbara Fitzgerald and Steve Garthwin who have taken on an increasing range of tasks and responsibilities to enable me to take on new roles. Particularly their role in supporting and sustaining the new members of staff.

Trish Fitzgerald's operation of our canteen attracts lots of praise and acknowledgement not

only from students and staff, but also from the volunteers who work with her and many school visitors. Trish's care and concern about the quality of the food produced and its relationship to the education of the whole community is much appreciated.

The Fair was a great success and I thank Tracy Barrett for her role in managing this important event.

Thank you also to Pieter Oosterhoff for his role in designing and coordinating a replacement heating and cooling system for our main school building.

My acknowledgement also to members of the School Council for their support.

Next to last my thanks to Hilary Wale, Susan Pearce, Cath Walker who have held fort in the office and in particular Bev Milner, our Bursar who provides invaluable financial and business operations guidance.

I also welcome Robyn Spark as a new teachers assistant in the Primary School.

I also have to comment on the extraordinary event of 4 members of staff who have had babies in recent months. Vanessa Avery, Talulah Vane (teachers), Carradene Hannan (our gardener), Heather Comacho (office)

To all our parents, students, ex-parents and ex-students, thank you for your support and contribution either of love, labour, donations or goodwill. The success of this school and the ongoing story of Korowal belongs to all of us.

Mark Thomas  
School Coordinator  
May 27, 2011